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ABSTRACT

This second in a series of 10 study units for a Migrant Educators' National Training OutReach (MENTOR) correspondence course describes the awakening of the national conscience to the plight of migrant children and the emergence of programs to care for and educate them. Designed for use in preservice or inservice teacher education, the unit reviews the history of American migrant workers from the post-Civil War period. It describes the three main streams of migrant workers: Eastern Stream of Puerto Ricans, Haitians, and Whites; Central Stream of Chicanos and Blacks; and Western Stream of Chicanos and Western Pacific immigrants. Excerpts from books and reports illustrate the dimensions and characteristics of migrant worker needs and how federal programs have attempted to meet those needs since the 1960's. The unit describes federally funded programs for migrants: state educational agency programs, the Migrant High School Equivalency Program, College Assistance Migrant Programs, Head Start, and migrant health programs. The human role of educators in the migrant education bureaucracy and the political future of migrant programs are discussed. A map of migrant student enrollment by states and national migration patterns, addresses of state offices of migrant education, and a 33-item bibliography are included. (LFL)

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HARVESTING the HARVESTERS

BOOK 2

EDUCATING THE UPROOTED
A National Commitment

October 1986

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Nothing will improve a migrant student's performance more than a teacher's positive attitude toward the child.

Felipe Veloz

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The American Conscience

Our story is of a slowly, very slowly awakening national conscience and the emergence of programs to keep that conscience from nagging too loudly. A consensus developed during the early decades of this century that the federal government had a role to play in helping dependent children, though only the crisis of the Great Depression prompted the creation of a nascent social service network with New Deal Legislation. The problems of migrants became a national concern after the Dust Bowl with the appearance of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* in April of 1939 and John Ford's film starring Henry Fonda the following year. Though no one could plead ignorance of the existence of the problem after *Grapes of Wrath*, the political pendulum swung away from social activism in the period after World War Two.

Several scandals and studies called attention to migrant conditions during the late Fifties. The CBS television documentary *Harvest of Shame* in 1960 helped ensure the inclusion of programs for migrants in the New Frontier and the Great Society legislation of the following decade. However, the political situation is never static. At worst, it sometimes seems that some migrant programs survive from year to year like the legendary Phoenix, rising annually from their own ashes. At best, the national response to the needs of migrant children can seem, in the words of Robert Coles, to represent "a morally charged episode in our national life."

Migrancy is an issue that raises great passions. Some growers charge that groups advocating migrant programs have a hidden agenda of creeping socialism while their opponents sometimes call growers greedy and cruel. Whatever your own opinion of the merits of the more extreme positions, it is obvious that migrant children are being wounded in the crossfire of this war of words. Their partisans are often angry, their adversaries are often angry, and they often bring anger into the classroom, sometimes openly, more commonly in the form of a volatile passivity. You cannot make the issues of migrancy dispassionate, so you must try to channel powerful emotions into creative rather than self-destructive paths.

Migrant History At a Glance

Study after study shows that the poor in general and migrants in particular have little sense of their own history. This means they are unable to analyze their circumstances in context, unable to see their plight from varying perspectives, unable to imagine a variety of alternative futures. They are afflicted by what one might call an exaggerated sense of the present. You must work to enrich their vision of themselves in time and space. Much of this will be related to their ethnic identities, but do not ignore their agricultural heritage.

The first real migrant movement began after the Civil War when freed slaves fled north into agricultural work in Ohio, New York, and other northern states. Migrancy became a way of life for them. As the seasons changed, a worker moved with the crops, the entire family going along. Women and children could also tend crops and pick fruit. Many children worked rather than going to school. Lacking any educational opportunities, the children followed the migrant footsteps of their parents, generation after generation. The deepest roots of migrancy descend into slavery.

Modern American agriculture began to emerge with the mechanization of farming in the early 20th century. Migrancy as we know it began to evolve at the same time, with today's patterns recognizable by the period after World War I.

Three main streams of migrant workers have developed. The Eastern stream contains many Puerto Ricans, Haitians, whites, and even some Canadian Indians, flowing up and down east of the Applachians. The Central stream covers the great Mississippi basin with migrants moving in all directions back and forth out of the deep South. This group is primarily Chicano, both documented and undocumented, plus large numbers of Black workers. The Western stream is a great migrant movement from Mexico and California and Arizona to Oregon and Washington, made up primarily of documented and undocumented Chicano workers with many Vietnamese, Filipinos, and other Western Pacific immigrants. The three migrant streams include many ethnic and nationality groups: Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, other Latin Americans of Hispanic origin, Blacks, Native Americans, Filipinos, Anglos, Vietnamese, Portugese, East Indians, and others.

Harvesting of certain crops has been mechanized and no longer requires migrants. The thinning of sugar beets in the northern Red River Valley of North Dakota and Minnesota is being mechanized. In Michigan, grapes destined

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for the juice and wine factories are being harvested by machinery that uses suction cups for picking. In the Great Lakes fruit belt, apples and cherries are picked by large hydraulic machines that shake the trees, causing the fruit to fall into canvas sheets. The date crop now requires highly skilled operators to run specialized equipment in the tall date palms. In our country's wheatlands, harvesting is done with giant combines and no longer utilizes migrant workers. As mechanization replaces human labor, it is causing significant unemployment problems among many migrant workers.

The three streams were always approximations. Migrancy is fluid, decentralized. In recent years the patterns seem to be breaking down, to be less and less regular. Increasing numbers of migrants settle out. This raises the issue of how long to provide programs to help the children of former migrants. Educationally, the answer is simple enough: help every child as much as he or she needs. Politically and economically, the question is more volatile. In any event, patterns of migrancy are changing as traditional streams become less distinct. As agriculture, immigration, and the American economy change, migrancy will change even more. Migrants are among the most vulnerable people in our economy, the ones most subject to change. With good fortune, education will help them merge with the mainstream. For the least fortunate, already unqualified for good jobs, further mechanization may leave them permanently unemployable, trapped in a permanent underclass.

The saying "If you're eating it, a migrant picked it" holds true for many fruits and vegetables. Crops such as squash, green onions, broccoli, and strawberries require a great deal of individual attention. Harvesting asparagus, "the crop of gold," needs a surprising amount of hand work. Migrancy is changing but it is not about to disappear.

You go up north and there's nothing there.

Rosa Molina,
migrant worker

Sharing the Blame

Farmers are not alone in exploiting migrant workers. According the McNeill/Lehrer Newshour on August 11, 1986, illegals from Mexico and Central America regularly work for reforestation contractors in Oregon and Washington who exploit the workers in order to cut costs to win contracts from federal agencies required to award contracts to the lowest bidder. The contractors who fail to win bids then squeal to the Border Patrol, demanding the arrest of the illegals. According to the angry contractors, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management wink at the use of illegals because they work hard and keep costs down. This is, of course, why farmers and agricultural contractors hire them, too. The economic and legal situation is complex, but two things are true: there is guilt enough to go around, and it is always the migrant who suffers.

The Shaping of the American Social Conscience

We cannot hope to comprehend what is happening to migrant workers without appreciating how they relate to the rest of American society. Sometimes it almost seems that the American public has to rediscover the migrant problem again and again, a situation as absurd as if engineers had to reinvent the wheel every few years. Here are three expert opinions on this phenomenon:

The migrant farm worker in America has been studied, surveyed, investigated, microscoped, and diagnosed over the years as the sickest, most depressed, yet least-known member of the nation's work force.

Dale Wright,
from *They Harvest Despair*, 1965

Some aggravated social problems need to be exposed not once, but again and again; they may be twice-told tales, but the second, third, and fourth telling may be more important than the first. Take, for example, the perennial problem of child labor in agriculture. Like the larger problem of migrant farm labor, it has engaged the attention of many journalists, investigators, and social scientists. But it has always been difficult to keep public attention riveted on the problem long enough to get substantial results.

Carey McWilliams,
from the introduction to
Sweatshops in the Sun, 1973
(McWilliams wrote his expose
Factories in the Fields in 1939)

A problem can develop and be well-documented for more than a half-century before an informed, concerned constituency begins to be heard.

Helen L. Johnston,
from *Health For the Harvesters*, 1985

Many bemoan our society's short attention span and our crisis mentality in coping with social problems. A case in point is the recent famine in Africa which went largely unnoticed for years until disaster was already upon us when the pitiful images captured by a British camera crew finally made it to the major television networks during prime time and tugged at the heartstrings of the public. At worst, it almost seems that a jaded public grows bored with the migrant problem unless some fresh outrage is announced every several years. Despite the grain of truth in this view, it is superficial. What is actually happening is more complicated. The national response to the problems associated with migrancy is but one facet of its response to related social problems. Compared to other industrial nations, the response of the United States to all social problems has tended to be sporadic, sluggish, and fragmented. This laggard response to social problems has no single, simple explanation. For much of the 19th century, the United States was a new nation, rapidly expanding, preoccupied with growth, quite naturally behind the more mature and sophisticated European nations in the development of social legislation. When trade unionism and socialism were becoming significant factors in the politics of England, France, and Germany, we were just eliminating slavery (and the Russians were just eliminating serfdom). America was still fighting Indian Wars at the time of the Paris Commune. Our wealth and power made us the dominant nation in the world after World War Two, but only a generation earlier before World War One we were widely considered a minor power, energetic but vulgar, socially backward and culturally insignificant.

Several factors besides our relative youth prevented us from evolving politically after the fashion of Europe. When we began to develop into an industrial giant after the Civil War, floods of immigrants provided a huge pool of labor that hampered union organizing. Employers had ready access to scabs and strikebreakers, and ethnic antagonisms among the workers made them susceptible to a policy of

divide-and-conquer. The economic philosophy of **Laissez-faire**, the French for "Let it alone," argued that government ought to steer clear of the economy, and the emergence of Social Darwinism (social survival of the fittest) in the late 19th century strengthened that tendency. *Laissez-faire* and Social Darwinism became so ingrained in American thinking that many Americans still accept their basic premises as axiomatic truths.

Americans by the end of the 19th century were becoming sentimental about children, however, and many began to seek ways to protect them from the economic jungle of Social Darwinism. A White House Conference on children's issues was held under President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, and from it emerged the Children's Bureau. This institutionalized the credo of social workers that society had responsibilities toward the dependent child. The philosophy was to help keep families together whenever possible instead of simply breaking up the family by placing the children in foster care.

A second White House Conference came under Woodrow Wilson in 1919, which committed the Children's Bureau to monitor child labor and inaugurated a Children's Year. A third White House Conference was called in June of 1929 by President Hoover. Since Herbert Hoover was no wild-eyed radical but rather a conservative Republican, it seems that by 1929 a consensus existed that the society-at-large had some responsibility for the welfare of dependent children.

Cynics scoff at White House Conferences, by the way, arguing that they are often ways to sweep problems under the rug by garnering a few headlines without actually passing any legislation. There is much truth in this, as any history of White House Conferences would prove, but they are evidence that a problem has attracted enough attention to merit at least symbolic responses from the government.

The watershed for the American social conscience was, of course, the Great Depression. Most people feel that the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt was a triumph of American pragmatism. While so much of the rest of the European world went toward the extremes of fascism or communism during the economic crisis, the United States muddled along in the middle of the road, without a dictatorship, without a civil war, without a total collapse of the economic order. If we never really solved the economic problems until World War Two demanded full productivity, we did enact laws allowing unions to organize, establishing a minimum wage, and setting up the system of Social Security that is now regarded by most Americans as sacrosanct.

If American society has neglected migrants, and few would deny that it has, that neglect must be seen in a context where very little was done for any of the poor until the crisis of the Great Depression forced the people of the United States to acknowledge their common humanity.

Because of the continuing appeal of *Laissez-faire* and Social Darwinism to entrenched economic interests, and because of our commitment to individualism and our preference for local control over centralized authority, our response to social problems since the Great Depression has been inconsistent, swinging almost with the regularity of a pendulum from activism to apathy and back, and back, and back again.

The national commitment to do something for dependent children is the oldest and most secure component of our social conscience. Programs for migrants have sometimes been linked to that commitment like a tail on a kite. Migrancy much as we know it, though smaller in scope, had emerged after World War One, but it was the crisis of the Dust Bowl that first made migrancy part of the national consciousness. John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* was central to this emerging awareness.

As if the Great Depression were not trouble enough, the American West suffered a disastrous drought in the Thirties. Dubious farming practices made the topsoil vulnerable to a combination of drought and wind, and thousands of farms were ruined. Oklahoma was especially hard hit, and so many people migrated from there that all migrants were nicknamed Okies, a term they resented. Woody Guthrie, himself an Oklahoman, sang their songs while John Steinbeck, a California writer, told their story. Here is an excerpt from his passage about the legendary Route 66:

HIGHWAY 66 is the main migrant road. 66—the long concrete path across the country, waving gently up and down on the map, from the Mississippi to Bakersfield—over the red lands and the gray lands, twisting up into the mountains, crossing the Divide and down into the bright and terrible desert, and across the desert to the mountains again, and into the rich California valleys.

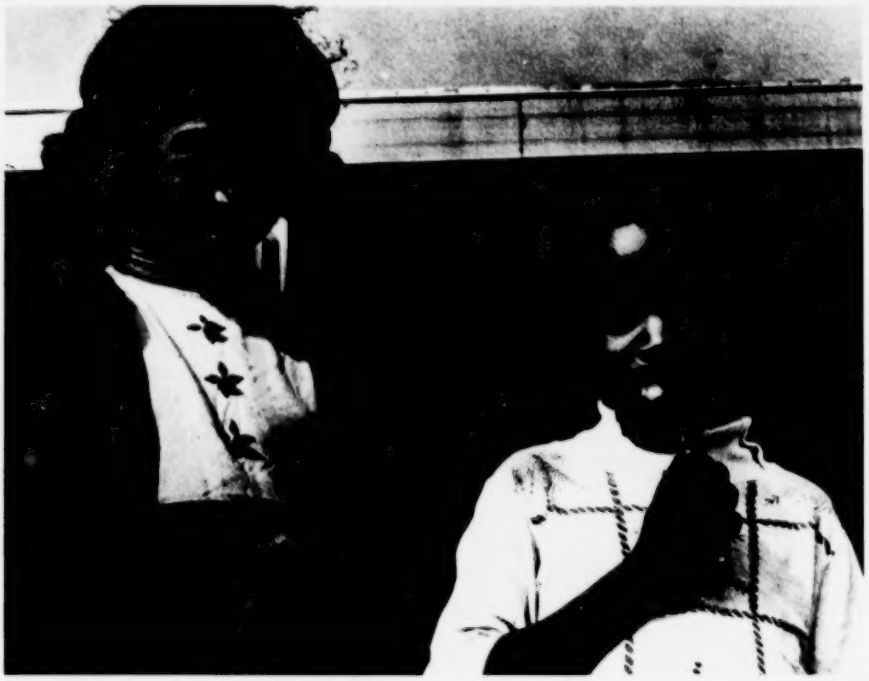
66 is the path of people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land, from the thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership, from the desert's slow northward invasion, from the twisting winds that howl up out of Texas, from the floods that bring no richness to the land and steal what little richness is there. From all of these the people are in flight, and they come into 66 from the tributary side roads, from the wagon tracks and the rutted country roads. 66 is the mother road, the road of flight.

Two hundred and fifty thousand people over the road. Fifty thousand old cars—wounded, steaming. Wrecks along the road, abandoned. Well, what happened to them? What happened to the folks in that car? Did they walk? Where are they? Where does the courage come from? Where does the terrible faith come from?

And here's a story you can hardly belive, but it's true, and it's funny and it's beautiful. There was a family of twelve and they were forced off the land. They had no car. They built a trailer out of junk and loaded it with their possessions. They pulled it to the side of 66 and waited. And pretty soon a sedan picked them up. Five of them rode in the sedan and seven on the trailer, and a dog on the trailer. They got to California in two jumps. The man who pulled them fed them. And that's true. But how can such courage be, and such faith in their own species? Very few things would teach such faith.

The people in flight from the terror behind—strange things happen to them, some bitterly cruel and some so beautiful that the faith is refired forever.

The Great Depression baffled the best minds of the day. Politicians, economists, agronomists, sociologists, they were all at a loss. On the one hand, many people couldn't afford the food, yet on the other hand food prices were too low to pay farmers to produce it.



At a time when many people suffered from hunger, the government supported higher prices by slaughtering piglets and plowing under produce. The irony was too great for many people to bear, and a few old timers still grumble that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the man "that killed all them little pigs." Here is the title passage from *Grapes of Wrath:*

And first the cherries ripen. Cent and a half a pound. Hell, we can't pick 'em for that. Black cherries and red cherries, full and sweet, and the birds eat half of each cherry and the yellow jackets buzz into the holes the birds made. And on the ground the seeds drop and dry with back shreds hanging from them.

The purple prunes soften and sweeten. My God, we can't pick them and dry and sulphur them. We can't pay wages, no matter what wages. And the purple prunes carpet the ground. And first the skins wrinkle a little and swarms of flies come to feast, and the valley is filled with the odor of sweet decay. The meat turns dark and the crop shrivels on the ground.

And the pears grow yellow and soft. Five dollars a ton. Five dollars for forty fifty-pound boxes; trees pruned and sprayed, orchards cultivated—pick the fruit, put it in boxes, load the trucks, deliver the fruit to the cannery—forty boxes for five dollars. We can't do it. And the yellow fruit falls heavily to the ground and splashes on the ground. The yellowjackets dig into the soft meat, and there is a smell of ferment and rot.

Then the grapes—we can't make good wine. People can't buy good wine. Rip the grapes from the vines, good grapes, rotten grapes, wasp-stung grapes. Press stems, press dirt and rot.

But there's mildew and formic acid in the vats.

Add sulphur and tannic acid.

The smell from the ferment is not the rich odor of wine, but the smell of decay and chemicals.

Oh, well. It has alcohol in it, anyway. They can get drunk.

The little farmers watched debt creep up on them like the tide. They sprayed the trees and sold no crop, they pruned and grafted and could not pick the crop. And the men of knowledge have worked, have considered, and the fruit is rotting on the ground, and the decaying mash in the wine vat is poisoning the air. And taste the wine—no grape flavor at all, just sulphur and tannic acid and alcohol.

This little orchard will be a part of a great holding next year, for the debt will have choked the owner.

This vineyard will belong to the bank. Only the great owners can survive, for they own the canneries, too. And four pears peeled and cut in half, cooked and canned, still cost fifteen cents. And the canned pears do not spoil. They will last for years.

The decay spreads over the State, and the sweet smell is a great sorrow on the land. Men who can graft the trees and make the seed fertile and big can find no way to let the hungry people eat their produce. Men who have created new fruits in the world cannot create a system whereby their fruits may be eaten. And the failure hangs over the State like a great sorrow.

The works of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price, and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all. Carloads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit, but this could not be. How would they buy oranges at twenty cents a dozen if they could drive out and pick them up? And men with hoses squirt kerosene on the oranges, and they are angry at the crime, angry at the people who have come to take the fruit. A million people hungry, needing the fruit—and kerosene sprayed over the golden mountains.

And the smell of rot fills the country.

Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them, and let the putrescence drip down into the earth.

There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success. The fertile earth, and straight tree rows, the sturdy trunks, and the ripe fruit. And children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificate—died of malnutrition—because the food must rot, must be forced to rot.

The people come with nets to fish for potatoes in the river, and the guards hold them back; they come in rattling cars to get the dumped oranges, but the kerosene is sprayed. And they stand still and watch the potatoes float by, listen to the screaming pigs being killed in a ditch and covered with a quicklime, watch the mountains of oranges slop down to a putrefying ooze; and in the eyes of the people there is the failure; and in the eyes of

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the hungry there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage.

Here, in our final excerpt, is a passage about the human toll of migrancy:

For two days the earth drank the rain, until the earth was full. Then puddles formed, and in the low places little lakes formed in the fields. The muddy lakes rose higher, and the steady rain whipped the shining water. At last the mountains were full, and the hillsides spilled into the streams, built them to freshets, and sent them roaring down the canyons into the valleys. The rain beat on steadily. And the streams and the little rivers edged up to the bank sides and worked at willows and tree roots, bent the willows deep in the current, cut out the roots of cottonwoods and brought down the trees. The muddy water whirled along the bank sides and crept up the banks until at last it spilled over, into the fields, into the orchards, into the cotton patches where the black stems stood. Level fields became lakes, broad and gray, and the rain whipped up the surfaces. Then the water poured over the highways, and cars moved slowly, cutting the water ahead, and leaving a boiling muddy wake behind. The earth whispered under the beat of the rain, and the streams thundered under the churning freshets.

When the first rain started, the migrant people huddled in their tents, saying, It'll soon be over, and asking, How long's it likely to go on?

And when the puddles formed, the men went out in the rain with shovels and built little dikes around the tents. The beating rain worked at the canvas until it penetrated and sent streams down. And then the little dikes washed out and the water came inside, and the streams wet the beds and the blankets. The people sat in wet clothes. They set up boxes and put planks on the boxes. Then, day and night, they sat on the planks.

Beside the tents the old cars stood, and water fouled the ignition wires and water fouled the carburetors. The little gray tents stood in lakes. And at last the people had to move. Then the cars wouldn't start because the wires were shorted; and if the engines would run, deep mud engulfed the wheels. And the people waded away, carrying their wet blankets in their arms. They splashed along, carrying the children, carrying the very old, in their arms. And if a barn stood on high ground, it was filled with people, shivering and hopeless.

Then some went to relief offices, and they came sadly back to their own people.

They's rules—you got to be here a year before you can get relief. They say the gov'ment is gonna help. They don't know when.

And gradually the greatest terror of all came along.

They ain't gonna be no kinda work for three months.

Over the high coast mountains and over the valleys the gray clouds marched in from the ocean. The wind blew fiercely and silently, high in the air, and it swished in the brush, and roared in the forests. The clouds came in brokenly, in puffs, in folds, in gray crags; and they piled in together and settled low over the west. And then the wind stopped and left the clouds deep and solid. The rain gradually it settled to a single tempo, small drops and a steady beat, rain that was gray to see through, rain that cut midday light to evening. And at first the dry earth sucked the moisture down and blackened.

In the barns, the people sat huddled together; and the terror came over them, and their faces were gray with terror. The children cried with hunger, and there was no food.

Then sickness came, pneumonia, and measles that went to the eyes and to the mastoids.

And the rain fell steadily, and the water flowed over the highways, for the culverts could not carry the water.

Then from the tents, from the crowded barns, groups of sodden men went out, their clothes slopping rags, their shoes muddy pulp. They splashed out through the water, to the towns, to the country stores, to the relief offices, to beg for food, to cringe and beg for food, to beg for relief, to try to steal, to lie. And under the begging, and under the cringing, a hopeless anger began to smolder. And in the little towns pity for the sodden men changed to anger, and anger at the hungry people changed to fear of them. Then sheriffs swore in deputies in droves, and orders were rushed for rifles, for tear gas, for ammunition. Then the hungry men crowded the alleys behind the stores to beg for bread, to beg for rotting vegetables, to steal when they could.

Frantic men pounded on the doors of the doctors; and the doctors were busy. And sad men left word at country stores for the coroner to send a car. The coroners were not too busy. The coroners' wagons backed up through the mud and took out the dead.

And the rain pattered relentlessly

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down, and the streams broke their banks and spread out over the country.

Huddled under sheds, lying in wet hay, the hunger and the fear bred anger. Then boys went out, not to beg, but to steal, and men went out weakly, to try to steal.

The sheriffs swore in new deputies and ordered new rifles; and the comfortable people in tight houses felt pity at first, and then distaste, and finally hatred for the migrant people.

In the wet hay of leaking barns babies were born to women who panted with pneumonia. And old people curled up in corners and died that way, so the coroners could not straighten them. At night the frantic men walked boldy to hen roosts and carried off the squawking chickens. If they were shot at, they did not run, but splashed sullenly away; and if they were hit, they sank tiredly in the mud.

The rain stopped. On the fields the water stood, reflecting the gray sky, and the land whispered with moving water. And the men came out of the barns, out of the sheds. They squatted on their hams and looked out over the flooded land. And they were silent. And sometimes they talked very quietly.

No work till spring. No work.

And if no work—no money, no food.

Fella had a team of horses, had to use'em to plow an' cultivate an' mow, wouldn' think a turnin' 'em out to starve when they wasn't workin'.

Them's horses—we're men.

The women watched the men, watched to see whether the break had come at last. The women stood silently and watched. And where a number of men gathered together, the fear went from their faces, and anger took its place. And the women sighed with relief, for they knew it was all right—the break had not come; and the break would never come as long as fear could turn to wrath.

Tiny points of grass came through the earth, and in a few days the hills were pale green with the beginning year.

Steinbeck's masterwork, and the film starring Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, alerted the nation to the presence of migrants in our midst. No one thereafter could plead ignorance to the existence of the problem. However, knowing a problem exists is far different from finding the will to confront it.

We spoke of American politics as a pendulum, never swinging too far from the center. As far as migrants were concerned, *Grapes of Wrath* was as far as the pendulum would swing in their direction for some time. World War Two absorbed the nation's energies, and sapped the nation's idealism. After the war, the climate for progressive legislation was cool, and the Cold War made it downright frozen by the 'Fifties. With the Taft-Hartley anti-union legislation of the late 'Forties and the McCarthyism of the early 'Fifties, little was done to address the needs of migrant workers. The problem was studied, and studied, and studied, with report piling upon report, but little was accomplished in terms of sweeping legislation. That legislation ultimately came about because of a combination of circumstances.

Helen L. Johnston's 1985 book *Health for the Nation's Harvesters* has an appendix listing the recommendations of nearly two dozen federal commissions between 1909 and now. She says, "Past recommendations indicate a considerable store of wisdom regarding ways to solve problems. Some have been applied, but the national will to apply them fully is lacking." We have known how to do what ought to be done for half a century and more. We lack the will to commit the money and energy needed to deal seriously with the larger issues of migrancy.

The Emergence of Federal Education Programs for Migrants

Many factors account for the social activism of the 1960's. The bravery of Black Americans and their allies in the Civil rights movement is a factor in 'Sixties activitism. They gave the nation examples of moral courage, even of martyrdom, during the integration struggles of the late 1950's. The youth of John F. Kennedy, elected President over Richard Nixon in 1960, seemed to offer the promise of change. JFK was a cautious, even a conservative man, eager to prove that a Roman Catholic could make a reliable Chief Executive, and he had won a very close election, so his legislative agenda was luke warm enough. His symbolic presence as a youthful, dynamic leader was important, though, as was the eloquence of his rhetoric. Most Black Americans, for example, were and are convinced that John Kennedy and his brother Bobby really cared about their concerns. When President Kennedy was murdered, Lyndon Johnson found a nation ready to respond to his call for a Great Society.

Even as Jack Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon in 1960, migrants returned to the forefront of the nation's social conscience. Journalists had begun to expose the deplorable conditions among migrant workers in the late 1950s. One symbolic turning point was the broadcast of the CBS documentary *Harvest of Shame* in 1960. What John Steinbeck had done for the 'Thirties, Edward R. Murrow did for the 'Sixties—he made it impossible to pretend we didn't know what was happening to our neighbors. The thirty minute documentary was broadcast at Thanksgiving time and its impact was electrifying.

The emergence of the current network of services for migrants evolved along these lines: a consensus that the federal government had a role in the protection of dependent children emerged before the Great Depression; during the Great Depression, basic social programs were put in place while *Grapes of Wrath* and the songs of Woody Guthrie and other works like *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* drew attention to the plight of the rural poor; exposes of the late 'Fifties and *Harvest of Shame* made migrancy a visible item, an obvious component in the Great Society programs of the Johnson administration.

It is not easy to say whether programs for migrants are new or old. The Migrant Health Program has survived for twenty-five years, despite another swing of that pendulum away from social activism by the federal government, making it in one sense a venerable old commitment. On the other hand, some programs for migrants have been abolished while others have been whittled away until they bear little resemblance to what they were ten or even five years ago. The situation is not static.

If you wrote to the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, which you could do at Washington, D.C., 20540, you could get a copy of a document called "Federal Laws

Related to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers," dated March 11, 1983. A synopsis of the actual legislation, it runs to forty-nine pages, covering such areas as employment, housing, income and nutrition, legal services, vocational rehabilitation, minimum wage provisions, occupational safety and health, pesticide control, and transportation among others. All of these are significant. However, for our purposes, we will focus upon the sections relating to education, health, and child labor, the areas you are most likely to work within. Although this material from the 1983 Congressional Research Service is the most accurate readily available as this goes to print, it is already dated. You must keep the system under surveillance as you work within it. Keep track of proposed legislation, too.

State Education Agency Programs for Migratory Children

Legislative Authority
Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, chapter 1.

Description
State educational agencies are eligible to receive annual grants for programs designed to meet the special needs of educationally deprived migratory children of migratory agricultural workers or migratory fishermen. **State formula grants** *to establish or improve such programs are based upon annual counts of certain migrant children who participate in a State program. In addition,* **discretionary grants** *are made to improve interstate and intrastate coordination of the programs, and an annual contract is made to provide support for the* **Migrant Student Record Transfer System.** *Fiscal year 1982 appropriations for the State agency programs for migratory children were $255,744,000. (These funds are for use in the 1982-1983 school year).*

Most migrant programs supported by State formula grants are operated by some 16,000 schools in 3,000 or so local school districts, though State educational agencies may operate programs directly or through arrangements with other public or nonprofit private organizations. Supported programs are found in at least some school districts in each of 49 States (all but Hawaii), the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Approximately 575,000 children participated in calendar year 1981, including both currently migratory children and formerly migratory children (who by statute may be served for up to 5 years after ceasing to be migrants). Pre-school children also participate, though priority must be given to children enrolled in kindergarten or grades 1 through 12. Services commonly provided in the programs include regular academic instruction, remedial or compensatory instruction, bilingual and multicultural instruction, vocational and career education, testing, guidance and counseling, and medical and dental screening.

Discretionary grant projects are to help State educational agencies devise better ways of providing services to migrant children. In the 1982-1983 school year, a total of 24 such projects were supported in 14 States.

The Migrant Student Record Transfer System compiles detailed personal, academic, and health data on every migratory child participating in programs supported by the State formula grants. School officials can both transmit and receive data through a nationwide communications network linked to a computer in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Definition of Migrant Child
According to the regulations, currently migratory children in general are children whose parents or guardians are migratory agricultural workers or fishers and who have moved with them from one school district to another during the past 12 months in order that a member of the immediate family may obtain temporary or seasonal work in agriculture (including fish or tree farms), fishing, or related processing activities. Formerly migratory children are children who were eligible to be counted or served as currently migratory children within the past 5 years, whose parents or guardians concur in their still being considered migratory, and who live in an area served by a migrant education project.

The Department of Education proposed changes in the definition of currently migratory children (and indirectly the definition of formerly migratory children) on December 3, 1982.

Administering Agencies
U.S. Department of Education; State educational agencies.

Migrant High School Equivalency Program

Legislative Authority
Higher Education Act, title IV.

Description
The Migrant High School Equivalency Program (HEP) provides discretionary grants to institutions of higher education and to other public or nonprofit private agencies cooperating with such institutions to help students who are engaged (or whose families are engaged) in migrant or other seasonal farmwork obtain the equivalent of a secondary school diploma. Participating students also receive assistance in subsequently obtaining employment or admission to a college, university or other postsecondary education institu-

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tion. Eligibility is limited to students who have not earned a diploma, who are not currently enrolled in an elementary or secondary school and who are above the age of compulsory school attendance in the State where the project is located. HEP projects typically offer instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, and other subjects tested by equivalency examinations; career-oriented work-study courses; tutoring; and personal and academic counseling. In addition, they often provide financial assistance, housing, and various support services. For school year 1982-1983, a total of 19 grants were awarded to HEP projects in 16 States and Puerto Rico. Approximately 2,300 students participated in these projects. Fiscal year 1982 appropriations were $5,851,000. (HEP originally was authorized under the Economic Opportunity Act and then under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. The program first was administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity and then by the Department of Labor.)

Definition of Migrant/ Seasonal Farmworker
According to the regulations, a seasonal farmworker is someone who has been employed in agricultural activities (including fish or tree farms) for at least 75 days within the past 24 months whose primary employment has been temporary or seasonal. A migrant farmworker is a seasonal farmworker whose work precluded returning to his or her domicile within the same day.

Administering Agency
U.S. Department of Education

College Assistance Migrant Program

Legislative Authority
Higher Education Act, title IV.

Description
The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) provides discretionary grants to institutions of higher education and to other public or nonprofit private agencies cooperating with such institutions to help students who are engaged (or whose families are engaged) in migrant or other seasonal farmwork successfully complete their first academic year in college. Eligible students must be enrolled or admitted for enrollment as full-time students at the participating institutions of higher education. CAMP projects typically provide tuition and stipends for room and board and personal expenses. In addition, they provide personal and academic counseling, tutoring in basic skills and other subjects, and various support services. For school 1982-1983 a total of six grants were awarded to CAMP projects in six States. Approximately 470 students participated in six States. Fiscal year 1982 appropriations were $1,160,000. (CAMP originally was authorized under the Economic Opportunity Act and then under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. The program first was administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity and then by the Department of Labor.)

Administering Agency
U.S. Department of Education.

Head Start

Legislative Authority
Head Start Act.

Description
The purpose of the Head Start program is to bridge the gap in early childhood development thought to exist between economically disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers, so that they may begin their formal education on a more equal basis. Head Start funds around 1,000 grantees across the country, who sponsor preschool programs for 3-5 year olds, offering educational, social, nutritional and medical services. To be eligible, families must generally be at or below the OMB poverty guidelines, although up to 10 percent of participating children may be from families above poverty. The Federal share of a grantee's program is 80 percent of program costs, but the Secretary may waive this requirement and allow a higher Federal share.

The Head Start legislation provides for a set-aside (amount not specified) for migrant Head Start programs. For each of the past several years, and anticipated in FY 1983, Head Start funded 24 migrant programs, serving a total of approximately 18,000 children annually. In FY 1983, it is projected that $32,637,000 in Head Start funds will go to migrant programs.

Definition of Migrant
Not specified in law or regulations.

Administrating Agency
Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families. Funds are awarded directly to local grantees.

Migrant Health Programs

Legislative Authority
Public Health Service Act, section 329.

Description
The migrant health program supports primary and certain supplemental and environmental health services for migratory and agricultural workers and their families. State and local public agencies, such as health departments and nonprofit organizations, medical societies, growers associations, educational institutions and other community groups are eligible to apply for grants to establish and operate health centers for migratory and seasonal farmworkers and their families living in communities which experience influxes of migrant workers. Funding is targeted to centers which serve "high migrant impact" areas, that is counties or other political subdivisions of a State in which at least 4,000 migratory farmworkers and their families and/or seasonal workers and their families live for more than 2 months in a calendar year.

Migrant health centers provide primary health services such as physician care, diagnostic, laboratory, and radiologic services, preventive health, pharmaceutical, emergency medical and transportation services, as well as outreach and environmental health services. Centers may also provide such supplemental services as home health, dental health and inpatient and outpatient hospital services as appropriate.

Migratory farmworkers and their families (and former migratory agricultural workers who are aged or disabled) and seasonal farmworkers are eligible for services under this program. Public Health Service (PHS) regulations limit free service to those with family income at or below the most recent Office of Management and Budget (OMB) poverty income guidelines. The 1982 Federal poverty income guideline was $9,300 for a family of four.

In FY 1982, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funded 128 migrant health centers in 34 States. These centers served 461,951

persons, of whom 294,910 were migrants and 167,041 were seasonal farmworkers. The centers will receive $38.1 million in FY 1983, a slight decrease from their FY 1982 funding level of $38.2 million.

Definition of Migrant/ Seasonal Farmworkers

"Migrant farm worker" is defined as a person whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis, who has been so employed within the last 24 months, and who establishes a temporary abode for the purpose of such employment.

"Seasonal agricultural worker" is a person whose principal employment is in agriculture on a seasonal basis and who is not a migratory worker.

Administering Agencies

Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services, Health Resources and Services Administering. Grants are awarded through HHS offices to State health departments or to community-governed boards which operate the centers providing services.

Child labor is generally prohibited by the FLSA, but there are exceptions for agriculture. Unless the Secretary of Labor has declared an occupation to be particularly hazardous for the employment of children under 16, the FLSA permits employment, outside school hours, of the following:

1) children who are 14 years or older;

2) children who are 12 or 13, either with parental consent, on the same farm where the parent is employed; or

3) children who are less than 12 years of age, where they are employed by a parent or a person standing in place of the parent, on a farm owned by the parent or that person; or where employed, with parental consent, on a farm that does not meet the 500 man-day test for FLSA coverage.

In hazardous occupations, employment of children under 16 is prohibited except where the child is employed by a parent or a person standing in the place of a parent on a farm owned and operated by that parent or person. Harardous operations are designated by the Secretary of labor in regulations.

Under a 1977 amendment, the Secretary of Labor was authorized to issue waivers for 10 to 11 year old hand harvest piece-work laborers, provided that he made a series of specific findings, including a determination that pesticides and chemicals would not have adverse health effects. The initial regulations were challenged in court, and, as a result, children may not be employed unless there will be no pesticides or other chemicals used on the crop, or unless data is produced to establish standards which will protect 10 and 11 year olds from adverse health effects.

Migrant child farmworkers will come under the exemption provided for employment of children with parental consent, or on the same farm which employs the parent. The waivers for 10 and 11 year olds must require, among other things, that the individuals while employed commute daily from their permanent residence to the farm on which they are employed, and must limit employment to no more than 8 weeks in the summer and early fall. These provisions would appear to preclude use of migrant child farmworkers.

Definition of Migrant/ Seasonal Farmworkers

FLSA does not define agricultural, migrant, seasonal or farmworker employee. Coverage is determined by specific exemptions and exceptions from the General definition of employee.

Administering Agency

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration.

The existence of a law does not guarantee that the law will be properly enforced.

Susan H. Chin,
Center for Public and
Urban Research,
Georgia State University

If the legislation strikes you as complicated, remember the slogan of Al Jolson: "You ain't seen nothing yet!" The laws change year by year, and are enforced by federal and state officials and auditors. This makes for mountains of paperwork. At some Migrant Education conferences, more time is devoted to dealing with forms than to dealing with either migrants or education. Just as Migrant Educators must devote more time to their students, they must devote more time to their paperwork. Those are the rules of the game.

A Summary of Federal Legislative Directions

To help you absorb that information, here is a section of the Phi Delta Kappa fastback about migrant education:

Federal Legislative Directions

Services for migrant children did not develop suddenly but evolved through a series of legislative actions. As one need was recognized and met, others became apparent. Federal legislation has had considerable impact on migrant education; some of the most important legislation is discussed here.

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 have resulted in many programs to help migrant families and their children. ESEA's Title II created funded library resources. Title III provided supplementary centers, and Title IV funded counseling and testing programs.

ESEA's Migrant Amendment (1965) established a National Migrant Program and identified certain guidelines and goals for migrant education programs. States now could obtain funding in two areas in migrant education: 1) instructional, and 2) supportive services.

Instructional services *include programs to improve communication and vocational skills as well as growth in cultural understanding and appreciation. Another important instructional area is the improvement of self-concept. Of great significance was the provision for pre-school and kindergarten classes.*

Supportive services *include health care (dental, medical, nutritional, and psychological), parent involvement, staff preservice and inservice development, school-community coordination, and exchange of student data between schools. (See ERIC's Migrant Education Bibliography for further information regarding services.)*

In 1967 the Bilingual Education Program, Title VII (ESEA) provided funding for bilingual education. That same year, former HEW Secretary Robert Finch created a new post, special assistant to the commissioner of education for bilingual education, as a step toward a massive upgrading of bilingual education in our schools. Now

migrant schools are able to provide much more help for non-English speaking students.

Although some states have had migrant education programs for years, federal funding has provided impetus for the various states to develop more comprehensive programs to meet the needs of their migrant population.

Migrant schools come under the auspices of the various state departments of education. The state is responsible for determining needs, goals, and directions, and makes its own choices of programs, agencies, and sites to serve migrant children. Local school authorities need to coopèrate closely with their state migrant program personnel so that all efforts are coordinated.

The state is responsible for enforcing legal guidelines at the individual school sites in order that funding is not jeopardized. For example, self-contained classrooms of only migrant students would be a form of segregation and would be in violation of federal guidelines, so this kind of homogeneous grouping is not found. However, nearly every other kind of grouping is used: summer only, after school, one or more periods of the day, weekends, or various combinations of these. (After-school academic programs get resistance from migrant children who often must work. Such programs must be highly motivational; otherwise they tend to lose their students.)

Many programs are funded to provide parent and community aides so that the adult-child ratio can be smaller and thus provide for considerable individual attention. Many exemplary state programs have been developed.

The Human Dimension

When you work in migrant education, you will become a cog in a mammoth machine, a sort of low-level bureaucrat. Most of us have negative feelings about bureaucrats and bureaucracies, so consider this introduction by Robert Coles to Helen Johnston's book:

I well remember meeting the author of this book in Washington, D.C. during the middle 1960s. She was working on behalf of migrants in the midst of the federal bureaucracy, and I had been spending a lot of time with migrant families on the Eastern Seaboard. I had been helped in meeting those families by some fellow physicians in Florida, who worked for the Public Health Service, and they had urged me to go visit the "people in Washington" who were then running the medical program directed at migrants. "If you want to learn more about migrants and their health problems, they'll teach you," I was told—and so I heeded the advice.

I'd never before been in one of those big Washington buildings that house so-called "bureaucrats," the pejorative word so many of us have been convinced we must keep using when referring to those who try to make our government work well—and I didn't really know what to expect, or for that matter, why, actually, I was making the visit, apart from the obvious effort to respond favorably to my Florida medical colleagues. But when I was there, sitting and talking with Helen Johnston and others, I began to realize exactly why I should be there, should stay and listen: to learn and learn—indeed, to learn what this book so thoughtfully and carefully and sensitively and intelligently offers, namely, an entire historical and social perspective on an aching aspect of a major medical matter, the health of truly down-and-out people, thoroughly estranged from the rights and benefits most Americans take for granted.

It is true, not all of us have shown any interest in migrant farm workers, even though it is their long and hard labor which enables so many of us to eat so well, so cheaply. Still, I have met many students in my classes who do have an interest in the lives of these especially hard-pressed fellow citizens, and

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for them a book such as this will be welcome, indeed—a source of education, enlightenment, and yes, even inspiration. Essentially the author wants to let us know not only about a particular social, economic and political history, but the consequences of that cumulative and shared experience for the health of hundreds of thousands of men, women, children. She informs us of a legislative history, too—a chronicle of a government's gradual but increasingly specific response to the obvious and sometimes devastating health difficulties of thousands of citizens. She tells us, really, that a struggle still going on—with the dignity, not to mention the lives of so many people at stake—has been also waged by others in earlier years, even as it will (one hopes and prays) be waged in the years to come.

I well remember the various public health nurses and doctors I've met over the years as I've met migrants along the so-called "Eastern stream," and later, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and in California. These medical people have not been able to solve the basic problems in our society that are so obviously the source of the trials and burdens migrants have to endure—but much pain and suffering has certainly been treated (or prevented) at those various clinics or outreach stations, and the gratitude of countless migrants is also part of the human record that is connected to this segment of our country's labor history. Years ago, when I watched one weekday late afternoon, as migrants brought their children to a nurse for their "shots," I heard a mother stop for a few seconds and address a government official who happened to be there, observing how things went. "This is part of the Lord's work," she told the official, anxious to put in a good word for a friendly compassionate nurse who was fighting considerable odds, to say the least, with her black bag, her vaccines, her medicines—and her advice to beleaguered mothers and fathers, their sons and daughters. The official smiled, a little embarrassed, I thought, by the obvious emotion being displayed. But the mother persisted: "God smiles on us when he sends a nurse here, and we all pray she'll keep coming." "Yes," the official said, and yes we all, no doubt will want to keep saying—even as we hope that the day will come when the brave decency and dedication of Helen Johnston and others will be honored as it deserves to be by a grateful nation, honored not only in proper testimonials, but with the strongest possible medical and educational programs on behalf of our most vulnerable people, the only tribute worthy of the long and demanding medical, legal, and administrative struggle, a morally charged episode in our national life.

Means and Ends in Migrant Education

According to *Children at the Crossroads*, it was 1970 before the education network was really in place. "The allocation for 1969 was $45,556,074, and in 1970 it totalled $51,014,319. The first broad onslaught on this worst of all American educational deficiencies was in full swing. This was no burst of 'do-goodism.' It was a cool, calculated—though complex—effort put forth by thousands of professionals at the three levels of government. It has led to nothing less than an educational renaissance, and experts predict that for every dollar spent on the program today, at least $25 of welfare and other expenses will be saved in 10 years."

While there may be pardonable hyperbole in the phrase "educational renaissance," the point is valid that this was no simple do-goodism. In American politics, we find self-interest paramount and enlightened self-interest running second. Do-goodism, or pure altruism, is an also-ran. Few would argue with the proposition that an ounce of educational prevention is worth a pound of cure in the welfare system or the prisons. The high-tech economy of tomorrow will need skilled people from the ranks of today's migrants.

The Future of Migrant Programs

One doesn't need a crystal ball to know that the political pendulum will keep swinging, that the American social conscience will focus more or less upon migrancy according to many changing factors. The coalition supporting federal programs for migrants will be subject to the vagaries of time and chance. Gilbert Steiner's study *The Children's Cause* says this about the difficulty of organizing an alliance between altruists and special interests such as labor unions or political parties: "The children's cause will not always lend itself to fusion with a politically consequential group pursuing its own self-interest. Providing education benefits to handicapped children is a case in point. So is care of emotionally disturbed children. In these and comparable areas providers are politically weak and parents and caretakers are few in number or too dispersed or too emotionally exhausted to be organized." Migrants are politically weak, dispersed, and subject to emotional exhaustion, too. With budget crises

and other pressing issues, it may not always be easy to sustain the coalition supporting migrant programs, which like so many others have endured significant cutbacks in recent years. According to the **March 1985 Memo** President Reagan's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 1986 called for a 15.9% decrease in funding for Migrant Education, a cut of $42 million. This compares with a cutback of only 3.7% for the Department of Education as a whole, much of that from loans to students whose families could presumably afford alternatives. **Memo** said, "Migrant Education was reported to be the only program for the disadvantaged for which a budget reduction was called."

Steiner notes that "places on the public agenda are assigned in haphazard fashion." Sometimes specific legislators champion a specific cause for personal reasons, while conferences and comissions "collect items without limit, leaving public officials bewildered." Steiner concludes that "The children's policy most feasible—and most desirable—is one targeted on poor children, handicapped children, and children without permanent homes: unlucky children whose parents cannot provide them a start equal to that provided most children. . . .children's policy will be successful enough if it concentrates on ways to compensate demonstrably unlucky children whose bodies or minds are sick or whose families are unstable or in poverty."

State Education Departments and local school districts receive necessary funds through Migrant Education programs, which are supported by such groups as the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, The Children's Defense Fund, the Nation Council of Churches, Roman Catholic bishops, and many other groups that often squabble among themselves. (State Education Departments and local school boards frequently battle organized labor, while the AFT and the NEA often fight one another, and various lobbies have been known to say a pox on both your houses when they feel the children are being caught in the middle.) Fifty years after *Grapes of Wrath* and twenty-five years after *Harvest of Shame*, the national commitment to helping migrant children seems firm, but the scope and nature of programs to implement that commitment are subject to the ebb and flow of American politics.

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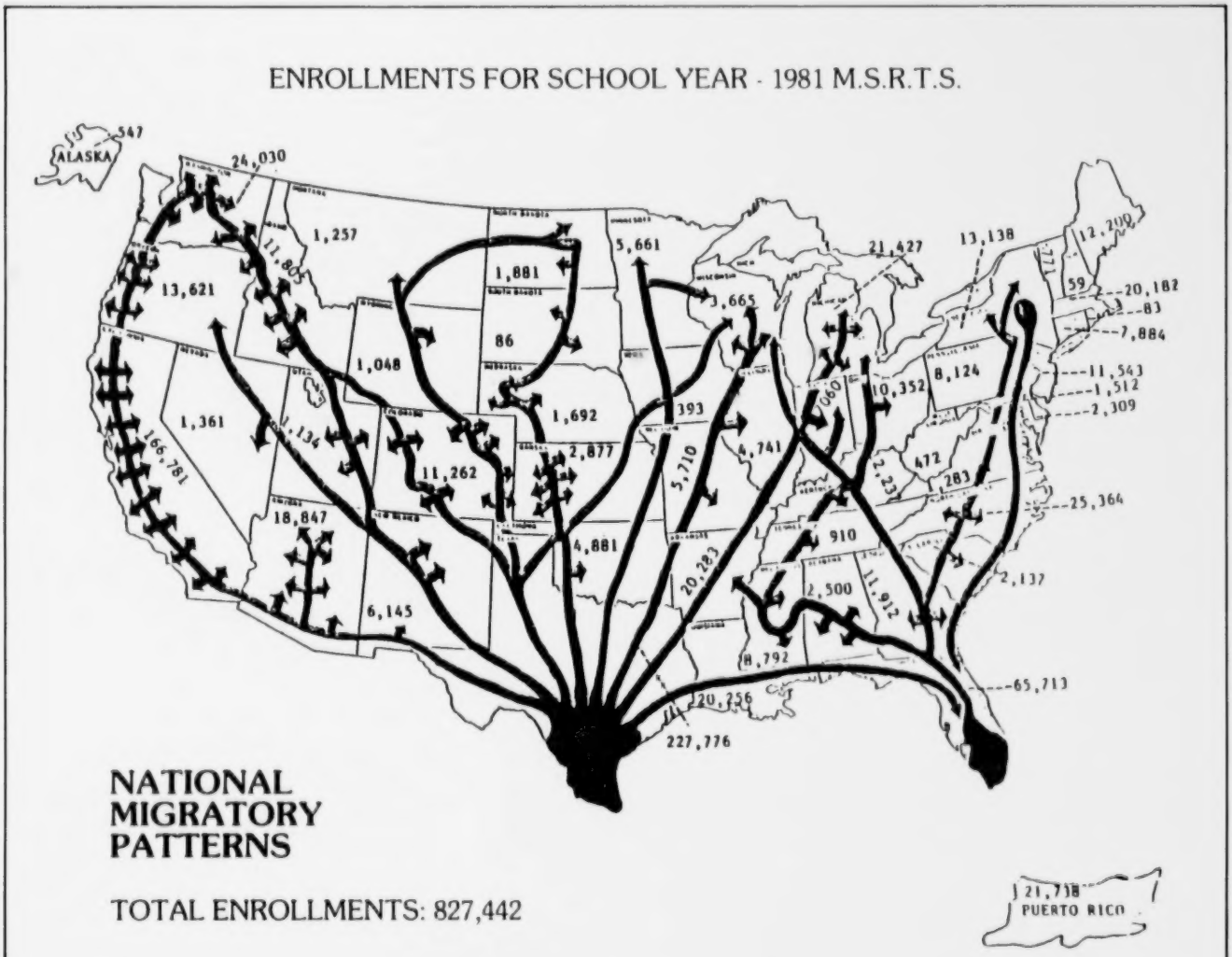

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Federal aid is not sufficient to meet the funding needs of migrant education programs that must serve a growing, deserving student population. The challenge, now, is to prevent any drastic cuts in traditional migrant funding while simultaneously finding additional funds in other federal, state, local and private agencies. Endeavors in both areas will be needed to ensure that migrant education continues to maintain a national focus.

Eugene Binder,
State Coordinator for Exemplary Programs for Youth,
Austin, Texas

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October 31, 1985

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